

Politics and Governance

Introduction

Under secular systems the framework of political parties is the country, whereas the framework under the Islamic system is belief. In the so-called democratic countries, nationals from other countries are not allowed to form political parties and assume power in the country. Under the Islamic system, however, the framework is much wider than that of the secular system in that individuals are not judged by where they happened to be born or what "nationality papers" they are bound to carry, but the only criteria is their faith and belief. As opposed to only nationals of a particular country may assume power in that country, Muslims, of any country or nationality, may assume power under the Islamic system. From M Shirazi, "*al-Fiqh series*", vol. 106, "*Politics*", pp 98-212. Editors.

- ❖ Democracy means majority's rule; if one gets 51% of the vote, one would be authorized to rule the country, and this is one of democracy's biggest blunder.
- ❖ The system of governance in Islam is neither republic nor monarchy as per today's Western world definitions of the two terms. Rather, it is consultative, and therefore it is valid to be called this, given that consultative is equivalent to collective or communal. The system of governance in Islam is not hereditary.
- ❖ Implementing Islam in an incomplete way gives a distorted image of Islam. This is the case with some of the Islamic governments today, which claim implementing Islam, but all they do is to apply the penal code of lashing the adulterer and cutting the thief's hand. This is not what Islam is about.

Inspirational Quotes

- ❖ When you review the Islamic jurisprudence, you will find there are fifty sections, with section fifty being on penal code; so it is one of fifty, and it is the last section, but why is it depicted that it is all Islam is about?
- ❖ The non-Islamic government is the government that does not rule by Islam, i.e. it does not implement the rulings and teachings of Islam, even if it called itself Islamic; so label is not important, but it is the practice and implementation that matters.
- ❖ Any ruling that is not in line with Allah's law is non-Islamic even if it is issued by a government called Islamic, because the essence is the reality and not appearance. If a human form is made out of cardboard, will it be a human being, even though it has no soul, does not see, speak, or think?
- ❖ It is not sufficient for the ruler to say; I am an Islamic ruler. He must base his rule on the holy Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet. If it is not supported by the holy Qur'an, the teachings of the holy Prophet, and the *ma'soom* Imams, peace be upon them, it would in reality be non-Islamic even if it is labelled Islamic.
- ❖ We should not march behind labels and slogans, but behind truth and reality.
- ❖ The reason that we see so much troubles and deficiencies in Islamic countries today is because they are Islamic by name and slogan only, and nothing more than that.

- ❖ The rulings issued by a ruler who is not appointed by the Almighty, or are not based on Sharia, are themselves not binding, rather they should not be obeyed, except in the context of necessity or fear of death or danger only.
- ❖ There is no doubt that Islam has its own particular system of governance and management of social affairs. Furthermore, this particular Islamic system was – to some extent – implemented for the duration of thirteen centuries until the fall of the Islamic government a century ago.¹
- ❖ The Islamic ruler’s qualifications are that he should be a believing man, fully qualified jurist or Islamic scholar, who is learned about worldly affairs, adorned with full justice and piety. Thus whoever meets these credentials and that the majority of the people accept him, he would be the ruler. If he loses one of these qualities he would be dismissed from his position with immediate effect. Furthermore, if the nation does not want him as a leader [at any point or for any reason], they have the right to replace him with another one who is fully qualified and meets all the criteria.

¹ Some of the aspects of the Islamic system that were practiced during the thirteen centuries until the fall of the then considered Islamic government were:

1. The principle “Land belong to Allah and whoever develops it.” People could freely use any plot of disused land for any development, whether for building the family home, a workshop, a farm, or any other project. For these people were not forced to buy the land from the government, as the land was not designated as “crown estate” or “public estate” or “government property”, as it is these days.
2. There were no VAT or “sales tax”, as it is prescribed as prohibited and illegal by Islam.
3. There were no “excise duty”, as it is prescribed as prohibited and illegal by Islam.
4. There were no “inheritance tax”, as it is prescribed as prohibited and illegal by Islam.
5. And various other such laws which facilitated countless freedoms to the people.

The above mentioned laws were first established and practiced by Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him and his holy family.

Inspirational Quotes

- ❖ There is no deficiency in the Islamic rulings of any sort that would make us require legislating for anything. We have in the hadith that Islam has given the rulings for everything including the compensation of a scratch.
- ❖ Those who resort to making laws contrary to Allah's laws, will have an impoverished livelihood, just as livelihood is wretched in the Islamic countries today, and they will have shame and fire in the hereafter.
- ❖ The Creator best knows mankind's interest, and the law that Almighty Allah has laid down for mankind in the holy Qur'an and in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad and his holy family, peace be upon them, is best for mankind in all aspects of life.
- ❖ The law which the Islamic government acts upon is that which is derived from the holy book, the Prophet's teachings, consensus [between Muslim jurists and scholars], and reason.
- ❖ It is permissible to have political parties that operate under the supervision of the *maraje'* scholars, if this is a prelude to a national assembly that would implement [the Islamic law]. However, the political party that is a prelude to an assembly that would lay down [*manmade*] laws – this would not be permissible – as devising and laying down laws is particular to the Almighty.

- ❖ It is permissible to have political parties that strive to develop the country, as long as it is not opposing the Sharia.
- ❖ There is no capitalism, socialism, communism in Islam as per these notions' definitions today.
- ❖ In the Islamic system of government, the number of public workers and civil servants is very small; because many of the government departments [normally seen in today's governments] are not required under this system, and that many of the tasks that are taken up the government departments today are taken up by the people or the private sector under the Islamic system of governance. Therefore, the government will be in charge of very few assignments, and it discharges them quickly and efficiently.
- ❖ Islam does not shock the nation with its reforms, but rather it gradually introduces them at a pace that suits the nation. Islam facilitates the opportunities for those whose businesses are permissible, and supports them if necessary, so that those businesses flourish. Those who engaged in businesses that are inadmissible will see they have ample opportunities and support in order to lead honorable activities.
- ❖ Islam eliminates wine bars, gambling shops, brothels, and suchlike, while at the same time cares about the means of living of those who used to lead vile jobs, by providing opportunities for them to engage in honorable jobs, enabling them to earn a decent living.
- ❖ Islam encourages everything that leads to awareness and promotes human culture amongst the nation, while at the same time prohibits corruption and temptations in the media. Islam highly supports the media if they are free [from corruption and temptations].

- ❖ The Islamic government is popular in the true meaning of the word. What would people want other than expressing their thought and vote, opulence, knowledge, freedom, security, health, and virtue, which Islam provides in the best manner?
- ❖ Life flourishes in all its dimensions under the just Islamic government; land is developed, houses are built, farms are cultivated, the manufacturing industry advances and progresses, trades expand, wealth is accumulated, and people would settle in an environment in which there is no oppression or injustice, or violence, or terrorism, or burdens or restrictions, or torture, or poverty or difficulties, and suchlike. Therefore, during the time when Islam was implemented, development, progress, trust and respect was commonplace, such that the world does not find today even though the means are numerous.
- ❖ Is there a country in the world today which is free from beggars? If you go to the richest country in the world you would find paupers and beggars... and of course there are countries with less beggars and there are those with more... nevertheless even in the most developed and advanced countries in the world, and with the most modern laws, you would still find beggars... whereas you wouldn't find such a phenomenon in Islam. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, was the ruler of the biggest country in the world, the territory of which spanned today's fifty countries, yet there was not one beggar.¹
- ❖ Is there a country, even today, and in the richest countries of the world, where there is not even a single beggar?

¹ For more details on this matter, see quote 182 of this work.

- ❖ In the Islamic country, when the correct Islamic rule governs, not even one pauper is found. The social welfare in Islam obligates the Muslim ruler to eradicate poverty completely.
- ❖ In an Islamic country, even a disbeliever begging from the people is an anomalous phenomenon.
- ❖ Why would there be poverty when the economy is sound, politics is fair, and society is virtuous?
- ❖ Happiness in this world and in the hereafter depends on three aspects; sound economy, just and fair politics, and virtue.
- ❖ On various occasions the wise Qur'an emphasized the necessity of sound economy, fair politics, and virtue; and Allah's messenger and the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali, peace be upon them and their holy families, have both pronounced them and practically exercised them throughout the entirety of their unique and ideal governments.
- ❖ The new administration that will assume the government of Iraq should be inspired by the principles of Imam Ali's administration and Imam Husayn's management, so that it will be a just government, based on consultation, freedom, and pluralism, and built on the Islamic brotherhood and one Ummah, and that it would be elected by the majority, but the Sharia-based rights of the minorities are protected – completely without any shortfall – for if the government is improved and set right, the country and people would improve.

The reign of Allah's Messenger and the Commander of the Faithful

Imam Ali, peace be upon them and their families, proved clearly the authority and competence of the applied Islamic law, and its absolute superiority over any other law.

- ❖ All the different groups of the nation must continue to emphasize the absolute necessity of all items of the constitution and its articles – permanent or temporary – to be compliant with Islam, and that Islam must be the sole source for legislation. This emphasize should be made via all means available; radio, television, books, newspapers, magazines, speeches, seminars, and suchlike. This is because the sovereignty and supremacy of the Islamic law leads to prosperity and happiness both in this world and in the hereafter.¹
- ❖ The Islamic government is a consultative government.
- ❖ The consultative regime is superior to the democratic regime; as the late grand ayatollah Shirazi, Allah's blessing be upon him, explained in his works.²
- ❖ The Islamic government's duty towards the nation is to preserve justice and fairness between the people, where ever they are, to propel life forward, to facilitate sustenance and wealth for them, to educate and culture them, and to maintain their safety and security.
- ❖ In Islam there are elections, voting, national assemblies, local municipal councils, and suchlike. We have all of these for our times, during the occultation of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance.

¹ Though this is a valid general statement, but in this instance the Sayyid was addressing the Iraqi nation after the fall the tyrannical regime of Saddam.

² See for example, "The Islamic System of Government".